

# The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association January 1998, Vol. 65, No. 1

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## Thursday, Jan. 8 This Month's Meeting

Marjie, KA1HIA

This month's meeting will be an open forum discussion on antennas. More information can be found on [page 2](#).

## Submitting Material to the Circuit

Material may be submitted for publication by sending it directly to the editor. This can be done by phone, by US Mail, or via the Internet (preferred). The deadline for each issue is the Thursday, one week before the monthly meeting.

**by phone**  
(508) 435-2055 (before 9:00PM please!)

**by mail**  
Robert Hess, N1UVA  
1 Cold Spring Brook Road  
Hopkinton, MA 01748

**by Internet**  
[n1uva@ultrasat.com](mailto:n1uva@ultrasat.com)



## President's Message

When I looked out my window this morning I noticed that my G5RV antenna which is strung along my side yard and into the back yard, lost about six feet of height because of yesterdays "2 to 4 inches of flurries". I am reasonably sure that those flurries will be with us through most of the winter. At least the antenna is still up. That's more than I can say from last year following one of those ice storms. 'Tis the season that puts our antennas to the test.

Hope Santa and the elves were particularly generous this year. Got my new HRO catalog not very long ago and the new toys are, as always, very impressive as are some of the price tags. But one of the great things about this hobby is that there is something in it for everyone regardless of the size of her/his pocketbook. Still time to start gearing up for sunspot cycle 23.

And speaking about Cycle 23, I was recently talking to several of our newer hams who were not licensed at the peak of the last sunspot cycle. I was explaining to them what life is really like at the peak of the cycle (you know, around the world on ten meters with fifty watts and a dipole fifteen feet off the ground). Their eyes just light up and they say things like "really?" and I say "really". Then they talk about like maybe it's a good time to start thinking about upgrading their license. It's always a good time to upgrade.

73,  
Jim, W1EQW

## FARA Membership Dues

by Martin, AA10N  
Club Treasurer

For those who have not already paid, FARA dues for 1998 are due as of January 1st.

As is our usual custom, we will continue to mail newsletters for a limited period anticipating receipt of funds.

Dues are as follows:

FARA Membership

Regular \$10, Student \$5, Retired \$5

## FARA Repeater Membership

All categories \$10

The March (and successive) newsletters will only be mailed to those members whose payments have been received as of the March mailing date (Saturday February 28).

Please help us to make the best use of our resources by either bringing your payment to the January or February meetings or by mailing payment to:

FARA, PO Box 3005, Framingham, MA 01705

We look forward to receiving your renewal and continuing to provide a focal point for amateur radio in the area.

## PacketCluster Committee Update

by Charlie, NC1N

As previously reported in the Circuit, FARA has formed a committee to investigate sponsoring a PacketCluster DX Spotting node in the Metrowest area.

The committee has now been formed. It consists

[More on Committee: Page 3...](#)

## Getting Started in SSTV: Part 2, the Sequel

by Sumner, W1VIV  
[swelstman@qis.net](mailto:swelstman@qis.net)

In my previous article, (The Framingham Circuit, [September 1997](#)) [if you missed this you can see it on the FARA web site -ed.] I wrote about my long time fascination with the concept of Slow Scan Television (SSTV). I wrote about how I built my first SSTV monitor about 25 years ago, and how crude it was, and how everything today is done by computer. These days, hams are sending and receiving beautiful high resolution, full color pictures! I wrote about my use of the K3BC software, and that, although I have been receiving pictures for about a year, I hadn't yet reached a point of confidence in my understanding of the software where I was ready to start transmitting yet. Well, I finally did, and I have been on the air for a month or so happily sending pictures.

The pictures have come from several sources. Most have been downloaded from the Internet, in JPEG format. A few were taken with my camera and developed onto a diskette. This typically costs only \$3.99 extra when you are having a roll of film developed, and you get the prints as well. Using a shareware program called Graphic Workshop, I can convert them to bitmaps. Then, using Microsoft's Paint program that comes with Windows 95, I can modify the bitmaps. Sometimes I erase the backgrounds, sometimes I add items from

another picture, and I also can add my call letters, "CQ SSTV", etc. Am I then ready to send them? Not quite. First, saving the modified picture, I have to go back to Graphic Workshop and convert it back to JPEG, and increase the file size to over 920,000 bytes which is required, (most pictures have lower resolution) and provides the required format of 640 by 480 with 24-bit color. Then, I convert it to a TIF file, and then click and drag it into my TV subdirectory. Finally, going back to the K3BC software, I can convert the picture into a slow scan TV format such as Marlin 1 or Scottie 1. All this sounds complicated, but only takes a few minutes. In fact, the most fun to me is not receiving or transmitting the pictures, but creating them!

There was one electrical addition that was required. A coupling transformer was needed to connect the audio coming from my serial (RS-232) port to the audio input of my transceiver. Since you don't want rf feedback, it is advisable to avoid your microphone input and to use the phone patch audio input on the rear panel. Ben Vester's (K3BC) series of articles in QST called for an audio output transformer with an 8 ohm secondary. Unfortunately, my Yaesu FT-990 internally ties the microphone input to the phone patch input, and the low impedance transformer winding loaded my mike input so much that I couldn't use the vox. Substituting a 600 ohm 1 to 1 audio isolation transformer solved this problem, and I was finally on the air!

I want to thank Leo, WA1HAM, for all of his assistance. He has been using the same software for some time and had the problems all solved. He also gave me a copy of Graphic Workshop, and patiently "elmered" me up the learning curve. Thanks, Leo!

Slowsan TV is now a major ham radio interest for me. It's old fashioned ragchewing with pictures added, which makes the contacts much more interesting. Here are samples of typical SSTV pictures.

Author's note:

This article was written a couple of months ago, but you can't stop progress. I have now switched from the above MS-DOS program to one written especially for Windows 95. Rather than using the RS-232 serial port, it uses a sound card interface. A **big** advantage of the Windows program is that you can be modifying one picture (writing on it, etc.) while receiving or sending another picture. Ain't technology great?

## This Month's Meeting

by Jim, W1EQW  
Club President

A number of club members have requested that FARA spend some time at one of its monthly meetings on the subject of antennas, especially HF antennas. With the onset of Sunspot Cycle 23, this is probably a timely topic and a great way to start off the new year. (It's 5 degrees F with several inches of snow on the ground as I write this, so I'd say we're well into antenna season.) Because there is so much talent in FARA on any ham related topic, or just about any topic for that matter, it seems that an open forum discussion on HF antennas would make for an interesting meeting. We'll give it a try at the January 8 meeting. So I urge everyone to bring your antenna questions as well as your expertise on the subject of HF antennas. Sharing "lessons learned" would also be welcome. We'll cover as much as we can in about 45 minutes including advantages/disadvantages of various types of antennas (yagis, dipoles, beverage, multiband), space limitations, dollar limitations, safety issues, and more.



[More of Sumner's SSTV graphics can be found in this month's newsletter on the FARA web site.](#)

...Committee Continued from  
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of Dave, K1HT; Lee, KA1USL; Sharon, KC1YR; Dennis, KE6DPL; Bob, W1RH; Jim, W1EQW; and Charlie, NC1N. Additional members have expressed an interest in keeping notified of the committee's activities or in participating.

Throughout November and December, the committee had "virtual meetings" on the repeater and via the Internet. Its accomplishments to date:

- We have prepared a comprehensive list of the issues that must be addressed before a recommendation can be brought to the FARA board.

- We have started investigating a potential site, AA1ON's QTH in Hopkinton.

The first in-person meeting will be held in early January.

Any in-process working documents for the committee will be posted at NC1N's home page:

<http://www.tac.net/users/nc1n>

At present, this includes preliminary coverage maps for the AA1ON site.

The maps were prepared by W1RH using propagation prediction software. This is a "working" web page, and its contents are likely to change as the committee's work progresses.

If we ultimately proceed with the project, we hope to dedicate a section of the FARA home page to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact NC1N at [ross\\_family@acm.org](mailto:ross_family@acm.org) or 508-533-7680 (before 9 PM).

#### Circuit's on the Web

by Robert, N1UVA  
Newsletter Editor

Have you looked at the FARA Circuit on the Web lately? Not only will you find bonus graphics, such as more of Sumner's SSTV pictures (including my personal favorite, Sumner in his Triumph, which I did not feel the photocopied edition of The Circuit would do justice) but you will also find **every 1997 issue on the site**. So dial up your browser to [www.fara.org/~fara](http://www.fara.org/~fara) and follow the link to newsletters and see just what The Circuit has had to offer this past year.

#### New Circuit Feature: QSL Cards

by Robert, N1UVA  
Newsletter Editor

Last month I introduced the monthly web site to The Circuit. Well, I understand that not every club member has their own web site, but most Amateurs have received a QSL card and if you haven't maybe you will be inclined to do some QSLing after reading this section in The Circuit.

This month I would like to introduce the new monthly QSL card section. If you have a particular favorite QSL card, please scan it and send it my way, along with a caption or story of why this card has meaning to you. This can be one that was particularly hard to work, or like mine, a first. For those of you without scanners a list of FARA members with scanners who will be able to scan your card will appear in a future edition of The Circuit. Bob, W1RH has a scanner. If any other club members are able to scan QSL cards, please let me know.

To start things off, I would like to present my first QSL card while working CW.

CONFIRMED CQD WITH		DATE			TIME	FREQ	MODE	STATION
BY	MONTH	YEAR						
N1UVA	6	10	96	00:59	3.706	599	CW	

DWIGHT E. HARRIS  
10 Whites Lane  
Woodstock  
12458 U.S.A.

☐ PRE QSL ☐ THIS QSL ☐ A TRAPPY QSL

#### Dayton Scholarship

Submitted by Richard Cosma, KD1BF  
Scholarship Comm. Ch.

The Dayton Amateur Radio Association is accepting applications for its annual scholarship program. Applicants must be amateurs and graduating high school seniors. Eight scholarships of up to \$2000 each will be awarded. To get an application send a SASE to DARA Scholarships, 45 Cinnamon Ct, Springboro, Ohio 45066-1000. Application deadline is June 1st 1998.

#### Web Site

This months web site is brought to you by Pete, KA1AXY. On his site one can find Australia pictures and more!  
<http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/1862>

Drop me an e-mail if you would like your web site in The Circuit.

#### FARA Horizons

Jan 8: Monthly Meeting  
Jan 19: Board Meeting